

the famous writer was a true class gentleman; I lifted my newly-filled glass to him and said, "we are all piss-ants."

I drank it down as those true blue eyes simply looked on and on, he was the old heavyweight champ, a darling in his class, I liked him, I truly did as the waiter rushed toward me again with the ever-bottle.

SWIVEL

I broke two chairs lately
while typing.
I was very drunk when
the last one broke.
I came crashing down at
3 a.m.
and never finished
the poem.

now I have purchased this
Lazy Boy swivel chair.
from the alleys of starvation
I have come
to this.
what a sardonic riposté
to my past!

I can spin around.
bend back.

I've got everything
but a button to push
for a secretary.

this Lazy Boy swivel has
many uses:

now I'm a tail gunner
in a bomber ...
I swing up, down,
around ...

tat tat tat tat

I'm shooting enemy planes
out of the sky ...

or, look, I'm the boss ...
I've called in some slump-

shouldered dolt
who has been working
all day
hungover.

I lean back,
look him over, he's
not much.

"Chinaski," I tell him,
"I gotta cut your ass
off. you're
finished! you ain't been
carrying your
weight! this is no
welfare project!"

he just stands there
saying nothing.

I spin my chair
look at the doll
sitting there with her
dress hiked up to her
ass.

"Mary Lou," I tell her,
"make out this fellow's
check. give him an extra
day. it's worth it just to
get him
the hell out of here!"

"all right, Jesus," Mary Lou
says to me.

(I have this Latino
name.)

I watch Chinaski pick up
his check and
slink off

now I
light a cigar.

there's a guy standing
in front of me.
he wants a job.

I rattle the application
he has filled out.
I exhale my expensive

cigar smoke
across the top of it.
I glance up at
him.

"you don't seem," I
smile, "very qualified."

"I can do the job, sir,"
he says.

I ball up his application,
toss it into the
wastebasket.

"you're wasting my time,
Rajaski! please delight my
presence by taking the
nearest exit! thank
you"

as he leaves
I lean back
puff on my cigar
exhale
look over
at my secretary.

"Mary Lou,"
I tell her,
"slide under this
desk and
give me a bit of
head"

put a man behind
a desk
in a swivel
and things begin to
happen.

this old desk
was here
when I moved
in.
now I have my
swivel.

I'm ready.

tat tat tat tat

I gotta protect my
fucking literary empire.
I like it.

I swivel to my right
and there on my
bulletin board
is tacked a photo
of Céline.

I swivel to my left
and there
hung on the wall is a
two by three foot
color photo
of a World War I
Fokker triplane ...

I've come a long way from
New Orleans, baby, and
I've got a long way
to go ...

tat tat tat tat

GOT CHA!!

TRANSFORMATION AND DISFIGURATION AT THE P.O.

there were always little tragedies
we heard about on the job
sitting on those stools
eleven and one half hours a night
every bit of outside information
was greeted by us
much like the inmates of a prison camp

every now and then
a courier would come by and say
"it's 3 to 2, end of the 3rd ..."

he never said 3 to 2 who
because if you had been listening
from the beginning
you were able to decipher all that

one night I heard it from two fellows
talking:

"Harry checked out early
when he walked into his house
it was dark
his wife and her lover were in bed
they thought he was a burglar
the lover had a gun
and he shot Harry"